

APPENDIX B

Environmental Field Trip Report

Yokohl Valley Reservoir

ENVIRONMENTAL TRIP REPORT. YOKOHL VALLEY RESERVOIR

INTRODUCTION

A team of environmental specialists completed an initial field trip to the potential Yokohl Valley Dam and Reservoir site on May 29, 2002. The field trip was the first task in the environmental study of several potential surface storage options identified for initial review during the Upper San Joaquin River Basin Storage Investigation. For initial consideration, the environmental review focused mainly on construction and potential upstream impacts associated with surface storage sites. The site visit provided an opportunity to conduct preliminary reconnaissance of existing resources at the various locations for the following resource areas: terrestrial biology; aquatic biology and water quality; recreation; cultural resources; and land use.

This appendix includes a brief overview of the resource specialists' observations, trip logs prepared by team members, photographs taken during the field trip, and maps used to identify and review existing resources.

SUMMARY OF FIELD OBSERVATIONS

This measure would involve constructing a new dam on Yokohl Creek, which is a tributary to the Kaweah River and New Dry Creek. The new dam site and reservoir would be situated on private property. Existing facilities include a paved county road, paved and unpaved private roads, several private residences and ranch buildings, and orchards.

Botany

- Yokohl Valley is relatively narrow valley with open grass and meadow fields being used for cattle production.
- The valley is vegetated with grasslands and meadow type habitats.
- The stream is ephemeral and currently dry.
- The vegetation suggests the water table is relatively high.
- Overall habitat losses could be substantial.

Wildlife

- The site has the potential for San Joaquin kit fox and San Joaquin pocket mouse.

Aquatic Biology/Water Quality

- Yokohl Creek may be an ephemeral stream that loses all its water in the dry season.
- The creek likely contains no significant aquatic biological resources, but this issue should be further investigated.

- Diversions from Lake Kaweah would potentially affect fisheries and water quality of that reservoir.
- Construction of the new reservoir would create aquatic habitat and fisheries opportunities, primarily for exotic fish species.
- Inundation of abandoned mines, if any are present, could result in water quality degradation.

Recreation

- There are no developed recreation facilities in either the Yokohl Creek or New Dry Creek areas. As such, no recreation-related impacts are expected.
- This measure would involve diverting water from Lake Kaweah. Lower water levels at Lake Kaweah could affect recreation facilities such as boat ramps and the marina, and recreation opportunities such as fishing and boating.

Cultural Resources

- A formerly more extensive riparian zone is likely, compared to that observed at present. The stream nonetheless may be year-round, or nearly so.
- Blue Oak woodland has probably been cleared for agricultural development. There is a moderate to high probability of prehistoric archaeological sites including BRM stations, hunting and fishing camps, and possibly seasonal village sites.
- A roadside historic marker notes that the Jordan Toll Trail ran through Yokohl Valley, providing access across the Sierra to Owens Lake and silver mines in the Coso Range. Rock walls were observed on the lower slopes of Rocky Hill.
- There are also piles of quarried granite, and mounds of soil (possible placer mining) closer to the stream, near Rocky Hill. Historic sites are likely, associated with mining, trans-Sierran travel, agriculture, and other activities.

Land Use

- The area in the vicinity of the dam location includes many substantial ranch houses with established vegetation. Some of these homes may be inundated.
- A large new hillside housing development would overlook the dam off Route 217.

Field Trip Log - Botany		
Trip Log Number:	S11	Project No.: 8004094
Dates:	May 29, 2002	
Site Name:	Yokohl Valley Dam	
Location:	Yokohl Creek west of Exeter	
Prepared By:	Jeff Glazner/Barry Anderson/David Stevens	
Date:	June 5, 2002	

Weather Conditions:	Hot and dry
Areas Covered (attach map with notations)	
Attachments	
Photo Log	Yes
Photos	Yes
Topographic Map(s)	No

Field Observations:

Existing Facilities:

None, except for residences and farms.

Existing Environmental Features as Appropriate to Discipline (hydrology; aquatic-water quality; terrestrial—plants; wildlife; recreation; cultural resources; land use; aesthetic)

Yokohl Valley is relatively narrow valley with open grass and meadow fields being utilized for cattle production. The valley is vegetated with grasslands and meadow type habitats. The stream is ephemeral and currently dry. The vegetation suggests the water table is relatively high. Could be wetlands associated with high water table. Vernal pools could be present in dry areas.

Need for additional (engineering/hydrological, or other) information on measures

- Geology or soils information
- Groundwater hydrology, if available
- Spillway elevation and limits of inundation
- Location of diversion structures and tunnel
- Location of realigned existing roads
- Location of work pads, access roads, and other construction areas

Additional data needs (within each specific discipline)

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- CNDDDB report
 - CNPS report
 - Ceres report
 - Field surveys for wetlands and special status species and habitats
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Field Trip Log - Wildlife		
Trip Log Number:	S11	Project No.: 8004094
Dates:	May 29, 2002	
Site Name:	Yokohl Valley Dam	
Location:	Yokohl Creek west of Exeter	
Prepared By:	Dave Stevens, Stephanie Murphy	
Date:	June 5, 2002	

Weather Conditions:	Hot and dry
Areas Covered (attach map with notations)	
Attachments	
Photo Log	
Photos	
Topographic Map(s)	

Field Observations:

Existing Facilities:

None

- **Existing Environmental Features as Appropriate to Discipline (hydrology; aquatic-water quality; terrestrial—plants; wildlife; recreation; cultural resources; land use; aesthetic)**

Yokohl Valley is relatively narrow valley with open grass and meadow fields being utilized for cattle production. The valley is vegetated with grasslands and meadow type habitats. the stream is ephemeral and currently dry. The vegetation suggests the water table is relatively high. The site has the potential for San Joaquin kit fox and San Joaquin pocket mouse.

- **Need for additional (engineering/hydrological, or other) information on measures**

- Need map showing each alternative dam location, inundation levels, calculated acreages of habitat loss, etc.
- Topo that shows inundation zone and extent of loss of various habitats including tributary creeks.

- **Additional data needs (within each specific discipline)**

- a. Need to coordinate with resource agency biologists and agency files on known distribution of sensitive species for this area.

Field Trip Log – Fish and Water Quality

Trip Log Number:	S11	Project No.: 8004094
Dates:	May 29, 2002	
Site Name:	Yokohl Valley Dam	
Location:	Yokohl Creek west of Exeter	
Prepared By:	Philip Unger	
Date:	June 10, 2002	

Weather Conditions:	Hot and dry
Areas Covered (attach map with notations)	Yokohl Creek
Attachments	
Photo Log	No
Photos	No
Topographic Map(s)	Yes

Field Observations:

Existing Facilities:

Existing facilities include a paved county road, paved and unpaved private roads, several private residences and ranch buildings, and orchards.

Existing Environmental Features as Appropriate to Discipline (hydrology; aquatic-water quality; terrestrial—plants; wildlife; recreation; cultural resources; land use; aesthetic)

Yokohl Valley is a grassland valley with an ephemeral stream. The stream, Yokohl Creek, was dry at the time of the field trip and probably remains dry until winter rains. Moist meadow vegetation occurs in various areas, probably indicating a high water table. The valley appears to be entirely fenced and used for cattle ranching.

Need for additional (engineering/hydrological, or other) information on measures

Need information on exact area that would be submerged by a dam on Yokohl Creek.

Need information on range of seasonal flow conditions in Yokohl Creek.

Need the following estimates for proposed reservoir:

- Mean depth for each month, April – October.
- Mean surface area of shallow water habitat (less than 15 feet deep) in each month, April – October.
- Mean rate of water level fluctuation for each month, April – October.

Need information on how Lake Kaweah would be affected by diversions to Yokohl Creek Reservoir, including changes in water level, timing and duration.

Additional data needs (within each specific discipline)

Need information on wet season occurrences, if any, of fish species in Yokohl Creek.
Need information on fish species residing in Lake Kaweah. Information on the location and types of active and abandoned mines in the inundation zone of the proposed reservoir.

Field Trip Log – Recreation		
Trip Log Number:	S11	Project No.: 8004094
Dates:	May 29, 2002	
Site Name:	Yokohl Valley Dam	
Location:	Yokohl Creek west of Exeter	
Prepared By:	Sandra Perry	
Date:	June 4, 2002	
Weather Conditions:	Hot and dry	
Areas Covered (attach map with notations)	Yokohl Creek	
Attachments		
Photo Log	No	
Photos	No	
Topographic Map(s)	Yes	

Field Observations:

Existing Facilities:

This project would involve constructing a new dam on Yokohl Creek, which is a tributary to the Kaweah River. The new dam site and reservoir would be situated on private property. Existing facilities include a paved county road, paved and unpaved private roads, several private residences and ranch buildings, and orchards.

Existing Environmental Features as Appropriate to Discipline (hydrology; aquatic-water quality; terrestrial—plants; wildlife; recreation; cultural resources; land use; aesthetic)

There are no developed recreation facilities located in the immediate project area. However, this project would involve diverting water from Lake Kaweah to the new Yokohl Creek Reservoir. Lower water levels at Lake Kaweah could affect recreation facilities such as boat ramps and marinas and recreation opportunities such as fishing and boating.

Need for additional (engineering/hydrological, or other) information on measures

Need information on exact area that would be submerged by a dam on Yokohl Creek.
Need information on how Lake Kaweah would be affected by diversions to Yokohl Creek Reservoir, including changes in water level, timing and duration.

Additional data needs (within each specific discipline)

Need the following recreation-related information for Lake Kaweah:

- Exact location of existing recreation facilities along the margins of Lake Kaweah
 - General information about recreation activities and use levels.
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Field Trip Log – Land Use

Trip Log Number:	S11	Project No.: 8004094
Dates:	May 29, 2002	
Site Name:	Yokohl Valley Dam	
Location:	Yokohl Creek west of Exeter	
Prepared By:	Irina Torrey	
Date:	June 12, 2002	

Weather Conditions:	Hot and dry
Areas Covered (attach map with notations)	Yokohl Creek
Attachments	
Photo Log	Yes
Photos	Yes
Topographic Map(s)	No

Field Observations:

Existing Facilities:

This measure would involve constructing a new dam on Yokohl Creek, which is a tributary to the Kaweah River. The new dam site and reservoir would be situated on private property. Existing facilities include a paved county road, paved and unpaved private roads, several private residences and ranch buildings, and orchards.

Existing Environmental Features as Appropriate to Discipline (hydrology; aquatic-water quality; terrestrial—plants; wildlife; recreation; cultural resources; land use; aesthetic)

The area in the vicinity of the dam location includes many well built ranch houses with established vegetation. Some of these homes may be inundated. In addition there is a substantial new housing development on a hill which would overlook the dam off Route 217.

Need for additional (engineering/hydrological, or other) information on measures

Need information on exact area that would be submerged by a dam on Yokohl Creek.

Additional data needs (within each specific discipline)

Need to know how many homes would be within the inundation area.

Field Trip Log		
Trip Log Number:	S11	Project No.: 8004094
Dates:	May 29, 31 2002	
Site Name:	Yokohl Valley Dam	
Location:	Yokohl Creek west of Exeter	
Prepared By:	David White	
Date:	May 31 2002	

Weather Conditions:	Hot & dry
Areas Covered (attach map with notations)	Aerial reconnaissance May 29; vehicular reconnaissance May 31, along road parallel to creek on its east side
Attachments	
Photo Log	Yes – MWH 0205
Photos	Yes – nos. 44-45
Topographic Map(s)	Area examined is on Rocky Hill quad; potential reservoir may extend east into Chickencoop Canyon and Frazier Valley quads

Field Observations:

Existing Facilities:

No existing dam. Residences and ranches.

Existing Environmental Features as Appropriate to Discipline (hydrology; aquatic-water quality; terrestrial—plants; wildlife; recreation; cultural resources; land use; aesthetic)

Cultural resources:

Prehistoric: More extensive riparian zone likely in the past than observed at present. Stream may be year-round, or nearly so. Blue Oak woodland has probably been cleared for agricultural development. Moderate to high probability of prehistoric archaeological sites including BRM stations, hunting & fishing camps, possibly seasonal village sites. Historic: Roadside marker notes that the Jordan Toll Trail ran through Yokohl Valley providing access across the Sierra to Owens Lake and silver mines in the Coso Range. Rock walls observed on the lower slopes of Rocky Hill (Section 8, lat./long. 36°17'39"N, 119°4'20"W). Also piles of quarried granite, and mounds of soil (possible placer mining?) observed closer to the stream, in Sections 5 and 8. Various sites likely, associated with mining, trans-Sierran travel, agriculture, and other activities.

Need for additional (engineering/hydrological, or other) information on measures

Need precisely mapped footprint of reservoir, with various potential dam levels; also need footprint of all associated project-related ground disturbance areas, to include but not be limited to project offices and maintenance buildings, construction set-up and lay-down areas, access roads, electric transmission lines, water conveyance structures, and

all other project facilities.

Additional data needs (within each specific discipline)

Need archaeological records search with California Historic Resources Inventory System (CHRIS) information center. Clearinghouse: Southern San Joaquin Valley Info Center, CSU-Bakersfield.

Also need brief review of archaeological and ethnographic literature pertaining to the area. Minimal level of effort: (1) to identify types of archaeological remains expected, time periods represented; and (2) to identify Native American tribes historically occupying the area, along with published information on major named villages or other ethnographic sites.



Picture: P5290055 Yokohl Creek, May 29 2002, afternoon



Picture: P5290056 Yokohl Creek, May 29 2002, afternoon



Picture: P52900129 Yokohl Creek dam abutment site looking west from road. Note riparian zone of Yokohl Creek.



New Yokohl Dam, looking West, toward new housing development 5/31/2002



New Yokohl Dam, farm houses

5/31/02



New Yokohl Dam, farm houses

5/31/02



New Yokohl Dam, near dam site location, farm houses

5/31/02



New Yokohl Dam Site, looking West

5/31/02

2PM



New Yokohl Dam Site

5/31/02



Yokohl Valley, view SE, 5/29/92



Yokohl Valley, view SE, 5/29/92

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